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THE WAR AND AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

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BY
WILBUR C. ABBOTT

With the author's compliments.

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By WILBUR C. ABBOTT

THE great adventure is nearly over. Whatever the "will to conquer," whatever the invincible determination, the heroic courage, the stubborn resistance, the magnificent self-sacrifice of either side in this terrific European conflict, a decision cannot be much longer delayed. The deadlock will be broken, and one side or the other will slowly and sullenly give way. For, whether there be a limit to men and war materials, food and credit, there is a limit to human endurance; and that limit will presently be reached. The central powers are in the position of the garrison of a beleaguered and blockaded fortress. To win they must raise the siege. No amount of sallies and sorties like drives on their eastern and western fronts, and cheap victories over Serbians and Montenegrins, will avail, if their enemies hold on. And to win the Allies must hold on.

That is the military situation, briefly put; yet the military situation alone is not what now interests the world the most. In a little more than eighteen months, millions of the first line of men in Europe have given their lives in whole or in part to the tremendous sacrifice; and many times that number of human beings have suffered losses which can never be repaired. More than a hundred thousand square miles of territory has been laid waste; the labors of past generations have been swept away, and the earnings of the future have been mortgaged almost beyond computation; the whole economic situation of the world has been disarranged. And, far beyond all reckoning of material destruction, the suffering inflicted on humanity has grown beyond our capacity to conceive.

Such are the fruits of eighteen months of war. And to

what end? That is the question which confronts us all. What have we learned from this great tragedy; and what shall we do now? What, in effect, has been the reaction upon self-governing communities, and, in particular, upon America? Not many months since, debate hinged on the question of who was responsible for the outbreak of hostilities. Now no one talks of how the war began, save in relation to how it must end, and the steps to be taken to prevent the recurrence of such a calamity. Upon whatever guilty consciences the horror of its beginning rests, time will determine. Now another issue dominates our minds, that such a visitation must not happen again; and, in particular, that it must not happen to *us*.

That is unquestionably the first result of the war on the thought of mankind in general to-day. In every part of the world, the sentiments expressed in the large, vague phrases of the Declaration of Independence—"life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"—have come suddenly to have a personal and specific meaning to millions of men, which they have long lacked. And the second thought is not unlike the first. It is a hope that from this great conflict may come some good, that, through an infinity of suffering, humanity may somehow win to a higher and nobler existence than the material prosperity which recent generations have so plentifully enjoyed, and which we have come to reckon as the chief if not the sole end of man. There is a growing determination to see that these men shall not have died in vain. Whatever vast mirage of world dominion and places in the sun may fill the minds of the lords of war, there is preëminent in the minds of those beyond that narrow circle of great ones a vision of a higher and a greater peace.

But when we come to the tremendous problem of how to secure it, men instinctively divide. Those "happy souls to whom God reveals himself in the form of platitudes" find here a golden opportunity to discourse at large upon their startling discovery of the obvious and their laborious demon-

stration of what everybody knows. Ignorant and ineffective enthusiasts endeavor to still the tempest with kind words. Politicians seek a remedy in the framing of an "issue"—a form of words for which the majority of their constituents will vote; while a not inconsiderable number of individuals who find in this world-wide calamity a heaven-sent opportunity to exploit themselves, fill the press, the pulpit, and the air with clamorous advice and prophecy. Yet amid the incessant din, the statesmen of the warring powers have thus far met all advances looking towards the cessation of hostilities with one brief but comprehensive phrase, "We must fight it out."

In those five words the answer lies. Whatever the original causes and circumstances of the war, it seems apparent that the situation has now come to this—we are in one of those periods of human development when two great ideas have reached an issue which admits of the continuance of but one. Behind all questions of economic progress and necessity, world dominion or balance of power, the rights of small states, freedom of the seas, stands the stark antagonism of militarism and the security of non-military states. Between them no compromise is possible; one must fail. Either the Germanic powers will be overthrown or the world must enter upon that competition in armaments whose neglect cost the Allies the first year of the war, and was like to cost them, if not their existence, at least the terms on which that existence might be maintained.

Such is the second of the conclusions at which men in general have arrived as the result of their experience of the past eighteen months. And the third is not unlike the other two; it is, in fact, compounded of them both. It is the necessity of determining, once for all, the standards of civilization which we are to endeavor to maintain for the future. This is no so-called academic question. It is the greatest practical issue which has forced itself into the world of politics since the abolition of slavery, far surpassing in importance all prob-

lems of international supremacy and forms of government; and, in particular, it is the one fundamental question of the conflict in whose solution the United States has a deciding voice.

The reasons for the necessity of such a decision are evident enough. They lie in the introduction not so much of new mechanisms into the business of war, though that has been the most spectacular feature of the contest, but in the promulgation of a code of morals, based largely on those mechanisms, by one of the parties to the conflict. It is this which differentiates the present struggle from its more immediate predecessors, rather even than those doctrines of world power or downfall which have found their chief exponents in the same quarter. And, as these are the peculiar product of the Prussian mind, which has thus challenged the accepted beliefs and conventions upon which our society is based, it is upon the central powers that there must rest the burden of justifying their course. It is, in large measure, their practices which have relegated to the background the question of who began the war, and made civilization rather than political power the issue which confronts the world.

If credit is to be taken for such principles and practices, it is but fair to examine, in the light of their results in the last year and a half, what effect they have produced in bringing victory to those who hold to them. The conclusion can hardly be reassuring to their exponents. For if, at the end of eighteen months of fighting, one phenomenon is of more striking quality than another in the situation of affairs, it is what may be called the hardening of the conflict. It has not infrequently been the case in previous wars that, after a certain period of combat, there has come a relaxation in the efforts of the antagonists, a weakening of fibre, a slackening of determination, a loss of nerve, tending to the conclusion of a peace favorable to the side which seems at that moment dominant. It was so in the Seven Years' War, which fol-

lowed Prussia's attack on Austria a century and three-quarters ago; it was so in the Six Weeks' War, which followed Prussia's attack on Austria fifty years ago. And such a result, if we are to judge from the highest official German utterances of a twelvemonth since, was expected by the leaders of the central powers in the present conflict. When it became apparent that decision was not to be attained by surprise—as it was at the outset of the War of the Austrian Succession, when Frederic the Great overran Silesia in 1742, and again in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866—much talk ensued of the struggle being determined by the stronger German nerves, the greater capacity for endurance, the superior heroism under suffering of that great people, such as brought them victory after Frederic's aggression had arrayed Europe against them. With that there went, unquestionably, a hope that, as in the earlier desperate period, some division among their enemies might snatch them from the jaws of destruction. And this change in tone marked a great stage in the fortunes of the conflict.

Such talk has all but ceased as the long, wearing process of blockade and attrition has gone on. Von Hindenburg and von Bethmann-Hollweg have long since declared that the Allies were now defeated and should make terms of peace in accordance with the military situation. But that declaration has fallen on deaf ears, and for very obvious reasons. It has been charged against the English that they regard war as sport; but these German utterances are the talk of minds steeped in the tradition of manoeuvres. "The Red army has tactically defeated the Blue. On the basis of the present dispositions, the judges declare that the former are the victors." And so the struggle ends. But this is not the language of war and politics as we hear it from the lips of those opposed to the Germanic powers. Stein and Stadion were not more set upon the overthrow of the greatest of militarists a century ago than Asquith and Briand seem to be bent upon the destruction of the German menace to-day. The first

Alexander was not more determined to endure even the loss of Moscow for the sake of ultimate victory over Napoleon than the present Alexander has proved himself willing to suffer scarcely less humiliation to rid Europe of this new danger to her independence. For this is no mere quarrel of governments, such as filled the days of the old statecraft; this, like the war against Napoleon, is a primal conflict of principles and civilization. And, if recent private reports from the central powers may be believed, some consciousness of this seems to be forcing itself upon the German people, and undermining their faith in their leaders. They have begun to fear that, if the Allies persist, they may not lose but they cannot win the war. Reinforced by losses, by sacrifices, and by sheer destitution, this feeling has been reflected in the most recent statements regarding the inhumanity of the blockade, and the self-sufficiency of the central powers to withstand indefinite siege. And this marks another stage of the conflict, not of arms, alone, but what is of far more consequence, of opinions.

Meanwhile what of the Allies and the world at large? Few facts are more surprising to the political observers, mindful of the past, than the simple circumstance that the Germanic enemies have not as yet broken away from their agreement to stand or fall together. It is, no doubt, partly because their respective interests are for the time at one; nor is that, perhaps, as culpable as it appears to eyes in whose sight an alliance with the Turk has seemed commendable, and Armenian massacres defensible. It is, in part, no doubt, through the financing of their allies by English and French gold, as Turkey and Bulgaria, with mischief-makers in America, have been financed from Berlin. It is, in part and in large part, due to the ineradicable passion of Europeans to resist the dominance of any single standard of civilization or culture or power over the rest of the Continent; nor should that sentiment be incomprehensible to the descendants

of the men who fought the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon.

But it is, undoubtedly, due in still larger measure to the methods of war which Germany has re-introduced into a civilization whence men had fondly hoped, before this war began, they had been forever driven out, that the conflict has deepened in intensity. Whatever parts the governments may have played, recent events and observers unite in forcing the conviction that this is now a peoples' war. That this is largely the effect of "frightfulness" no disinterested person can well deny; and Germany's best friends must deplore a policy which has lost her more than a great defeat, and recruited the ranks and determination of her opponents more than a victory of the Allies. If the latent barbarism beneath the veneer of civilization has proved greater than we thought, it is no less evident that men's nerves have not suffered as much deterioration from modern conditions as was believed by those who sought through such means to overpower these opponents. And the demonstrated futility of such operations, were there no other reason for their discontinuance, portends their re-elimination from the military code.

Yet it is not alone by their effect upon the enemies of Germany that we must judge the matter. It is idle to try to evade the fact that the great outstanding result of the eighteen months of conflict upon the world at large has been the alienation of sympathy from the German cause. Many to whom England was anathema, to whom France and Italy were no more than names, and Russia only the symbol of a cruel and unenlightened despotism, have come to the same position as the Allies in the face of the events of the war. Yet theirs has not been the great disillusionment. On those whose lives have been spent in contact with men of German blood, to whom German was another mother tongue, who have owed their education and their impulse to science and scholarship, to art and music, largely to that influence, to

those whose lifelong friends were of that race, the revelation of the military and diplomatic morality of the central powers has fallen heavily. And still more to those who have loyally accepted the faiths and practices of their adopted country which has given them the liberty and the opportunity denied them at home, with all their affection for the land from whence they came, the conduct of those now directing German destinies has been a crushing blow. Nor can we but believe that, once the hot blood of fight has had time to cool, and all the facts have been made manifest, the deeper morality of that older Germany will re-assert itself against the false patriotism and the spurious philosophy which, in the hands of the facile servants of a dynastic interest, have so misled them into this long-abandoned road of human progress.

The well-known facts of a year and a half of war have taught the world what are the peculiar products of the school which now rules Germany. And no attempt to cover them in the decent apparel of modern civilization and make them seem natural, inevitable, and in accord with the sentiments of the world at large, has succeeded. No diplomatic device, no sophistry, has explained or atoned for them at the bar of public opinion. There is not a neutral independent newspaper in the world which has not condemned them—and nothing better represents their standing before mankind than that.

Such are the contentions of the Allies and their sympathizers. Against them the Germanic advocates have urged three main lines of defense. The first and strongest is the *tu quoque* argument—that, if the Germans are bad, their enemies are worse. The second is the old contention that all is fair in war. The third is the peculiar, esoteric doctrine of *Innerlichkeit*—the spiritual superiority of the German race,—which, while it demands that its opponents adhere rigidly to the rules of civilized warfare, absolves from that obligation those of Teutonic blood, who are declared to owe obedience

only to a higher law, created by themselves. To these contentions the Allies have retorted, in effect, that the record of broken faith and atrocities speaks for itself, since it is impossible for the Germans to set against their acts any such list on the part of their opponents. Against the second assertion, not only the Allies and their sympathizers, but men in general, have virtually declared in favor of the doctrine that the interests of humanity are superior to success, and that the practices which violate its most fundamental principles must cease. Against the third, no argument avails. Upon the battlements of blind belief, reason beats in vain. Yet, apart from their natural predilection in favor of their own customs and convictions, all nations would undoubtedly unite in declaring that it is wholly impossible that truth is revealed only to one among their number; that, amid all the vast and complex human societies, one alone should enjoy the light, and the rest be forever condemned to sit in outer darkness; and that superiority in all things is an attribute of any merely human race or organization. Nor are men in general inclined to admit the doctrine of a nation of supermen.

Such is the heart of the great argument as it stands now after eighteen months; and the German activities upon which it is based are the reasons why the war enters its last phase in the form it does. For the questions these activities have raised are deeper far than international agreements or systems of government; they are the problems of the human heart. And because they are, they must be fought out. The opponents of those who hold to such practices as we have seen introduced, have determined that, if strength in them lies, they will make an end, not merely of plans to dominate the Continent or gain new footholds beyond the sea, not of military autocracy alone nor its exponents. They are bent upon the elimination from men's thought and action of those devices which, resurrected from the worst days of the past, have found newer and fiercer expression in the hands

of men who have summoned the beneficent forces of science to replace the humane conventions of society with their unbridled will. They have set themselves to crush out that return to barbarism which has clothed itself in a pseudo-modern philosophy and very real modern mechanical forms.

This is why the combatants found, on their second Christmas in the trenches, none of the friendlier feeling which the first expressed. This is the reason why the sentiments of all not directly under German influence have turned against their cause. Those now directing German destinies have set their standards against that common humanity developed through a thousand years of civilized progress. And no disinterested man but must condemn the leadership which has brought this to pass, obscuring great qualities with the blindness of a few engendered by devotion to the god of power. Far beyond any question of politics, men now fight for the continuation of society itself, and of the hard-won moral heritage upon which it is based.

Yet these, though by far the greatest, are not the only results of the past eighteen months upon the thought of mankind. If there is one feature of the present day more remarkable than another, it is the emergence of many things long alien or neglected in our daily life. The revival of a profound religious sense, the development of poetry, the searchings of the heart accompanying a deep spiritual experience, are evident on every hand abroad. At the same time, the tremendous economic problems raised by the continuance of the conflict portend not merely a political and financial but a social revolution once the period of strife is done. These no less than the military and political results of the struggle—perhaps far more—are the problems which press already for solution, and will press ever increasingly in the future. The generation which fought the war will disappear; the millions already in their graves will in no long time be joined by their comrades. But long before the last roll of the vanished armies is made up, and for long after-

ward, the issues of the conflict which are neither warlike nor diplomatic will continue to demand a statesmanship greater even than those imposed upon us by the war itself. For there can be no doubt that the conclusion of the armed conflict will be the beginning of a social situation upon whose treatment depends the future of civilized mankind.

But what, meanwhile, of the United States? What has it learned and what is it to do as a result of what we have seen and endured, and hoped, and feared, while our kinsmen beyond the sea were engaged in this work of destruction? We have been in, if not of, the war; when it is over we, like the combatants, and in perhaps no less degree, must face the problems it has raised. We have grown richer, and it seems to many, in consequence, more powerful; we have contributed to every phase of the conflict but one; we have been appealed to by every side not merely for material but for moral support. And what is the result? The answer is peculiarly difficult and unsatisfactory. We have grown in wealth without a corresponding increase in responsibility, and our prosperity has been accompanied by no discipline which makes for the strengthening of national character. We have lacked the tremendous experience which comes from the expenditure of the last ounce of physical energy, and a faith strained to the breaking point; and, with all the material losses which accompany any such struggle such as Europe now endures, it remains an open question whether in comparison, let us say with France, we have gained or lost in the ultimate resolution of events. For of all the nations of equal rank in the world, we have not been able to formulate with any definiteness a collective opinion into a national ideal or policy, and take measures to put it into effect.

This is not, perhaps, to be much wondered at when we consider that the United States has been the scene, if not of the conflict of arms, of the greatest conflict of opinions in the world. As in other regions remote from the field of

battle, but in far greater degree, there has been felt here the influence of the leaven at work among the warring powers. Apart from the horrors of armed struggle, the present war has deluged mankind with an amount of loose political utterance—it would be sacrilege to call it thought—which is only less appalling than the carnage itself; and of this America has had its full share. To bolster up the worst of its controversial atrocities, history has been distorted till it cries aloud for vengeance; logic has been twisted out of whatever resemblance it ever bore to reason; law has been transformed into cabalistic formulae beside which its earlier complexities appear simple axioms; and political science, so-called, has reverted to original chaos, without form, and for the most part void. The sophists have done their part, and in their hands new and preposterous fantasies have assumed almost the appearance of reality. The propagandists have aided them by advancing the most patently absurd contentions, with such apparent wisdom, gravity, and profound conceit, and maintaining them with such solemn assurance that even the wary have not infrequently been deceived.

It is small wonder, then, in this topsy-turvy world which the debaters have created for us, that men are misled; for many of our oldest and most deeply rooted convictions have withered in a night, and the result has been a shock to our national complacency. We may smile over the grotesque misreading of history from which Count zu Reventlow and his followers have drawn their fantastic theory of the growth of the British Empire; but we find nothing amusing in the collapse of our firmly held belief that the United States was “the melting pot of nations,” and the realization that it has not assimilated its foreign elements, nor fused them into one, least of all the one which we once fondly believed was ours. We may reject the arguments which are set forth to justify Belgium and the “Lusitania,” the Zeppelin and the submarine; but we cannot evade the fact that our

boasted civilization has made such things mechanically possible without making them morally impossible. We may resent the insult to our intelligence involved in diplomatic interchanges which seek to convince us that outrages against American lives are justified or purchasable; but we cannot much longer deceive ourselves into believing that wealth is power, and distance a shield. We may felicitate ourselves upon the activities of our private citizens which have rescued one people from starvation and another from the plague, and given aid to sufferers everywhere; but we cannot escape the suspicion that our public course has too often gained for us the less than kindly contempt of every warring power. We may repudiate charges of selfish materialism; but we have discovered that too many among us interpret neutrality as a denial of our privilege to choose between right and wrong, and to declare our choice. And this, to men who have been unaccustomed for three hundred years to take their opinions ready-made from an "inspired" authority, is a rude shock to our conception of liberty.

But these are not all, nor even the most important of the many considerations which have forced themselves upon us as a result of the events of the past eighteen months. Over-shadowing all others are two upon which our intellectual energies must be bent if we are to gain anything of value from the great world experience. The first is the immediate question of national security, so-called preparedness; the second is the fundamental problem of government itself, the age-long issue of democracy.

Thus far, it must be confessed, the clamor of the disputants has not tended greatly to clear the issue; for the divergences between the various groups engaged are so wide as to prevent any real conclusion on what ought ultimately to be our policy. It is as futile to argue that our coast is invulnerable as to declare that we have virtually no coast defense; yet each opinion finds willing advocates. It is as idle to contend that we are in no danger from aggres-

sion as to affirm that the enemy is all but at our gates; yet each conviction has its champions. The Monroe Doctrine, we have been assured, is now an outworn shibboleth, repugnant to all South American sentiment. But if, like Holland three centuries ago, a European power should seize Bahia and Pernambuco as bases for a new colonial adventure, we should find overnight that no nation, least of all the United States, can be indifferent to the fate or ambitions of the world outside. We have been taught that nations get what they prepare for; and some assert that, this being true, pacifism should be our aim, and a disarmed neutrality our policy. But if the past years have taught us nothing else, they should have made it clear to everyone that a spirit of great adventure and unscrupulous statecraft has again taken its place in the affairs of the world, and there is forced upon us, not the choice between war and peace, but between security and subjugation.

Amid such confusion of tongues, it is not to be wondered at that the debates of our lawgivers have tended to temper technical advice with political exigency; nor that, in the peculiar organizations of our system of government, the obvious lessons of the present war, as evidenced by the experiences of England and of France, have scarcely penetrated the minds of men at odds over questions of political theory and partisan expediency. The ability of our manufacturers to produce war material, the popular response to the appeal for more military training, the utterances of many public men outside the field of politics—have again demonstrated the fact that, save at certain periods and in certain hands, a popular government represents not the highest efficiency, intelligence, and conscience of the community but an average reduced to meet the qualities of the lower levels it must placate or persuade.

Yet this is not the root of the matter, after all, save as it bears upon the whole problem of democracy. We have seen in this great war that, contrary to a widely held belief,

it has not been those who had the least to lose but those who had the most that have been foremost in the fight. We have seen an aristocracy justify itself. We have seen that the great, imperative necessity is to rouse the smug and complacent masses, to bring the slackers into line, and enforce duty and self-sacrifice, authority and obedience upon those to whom such matters were unheeded or unknown. That result has been achieved in Germany chiefly by the pressure of government; in England by persuasion; in France by both. But in each country it teaches the same lesson, that universal service is the real democracy and a volunteer system a discrimination in favor of the least desirable element of society. It has thrown into high relief the problem which every community is called upon to face, the radical selfishness of a great number of its members. When the spirit of self-sacrifice, of patriotism, pride, or shame, has sent the finer elements of a people to the post of danger, there always remains a residuum which seeks safety or profit or both from the bitter extremity of its native land. Nor has any nation, least of all our own, any call to sneer at our kinsfolk across the sea; for in the darkest hours of our history, the Revolution and the Civil War, we exhibited the same phenomena. That, in a like crisis, we should again exhibit such a condition no one can doubt.

And here lies the first of our lessons of the war. That we shall have men and munitions for our defense goes without saying; that we shall even have some plan of defense is equally true. But that we shall have the spirit and the intelligence to make the best use of our resources, the courage to impose the great burden equally upon all, is another matter. For the greatest assets of a nation in a crisis are not men and munitions; they are leaders, and followers with a purpose beyond the desire to save their skins. If we are to be driven to take up the burdens of a world power, it is not enough to have resources such as ours. It is not enough even to have a navy and military pro-

gramme, coast defenses, an army, ships, and aeroplanes. Such a programme means the establishment of a new profession, diplomacy; of new careers in the public service, civil and military, which shall attract men of talent away from the mere pursuit of wealth. It means not merely the education of men to fill such posts, but of the people at large to meet these new responsibilities and the burdens which they entail—above all, to view life and public affairs with new eyes, and to exchange their old provincial attitude of mind for an intelligent conception of the world in which they live. It means, in brief, regeneration and a policy.

It is a hard alternative; and there is little wonder that the pacifists have found in it the chief basis for their arguments for peace, since this plan is not compatible with the comfortable isolation which we have so long enjoyed. Nor—and this is the crux of the whole great problem to our minds—does it at first sight seem compatible with those great principles upon which our whole fabric of government and society is based. And this is the question which has turned men not merely towards pacifism but to review the entire basis of our political and moral existence as a people. For there are those, neither unlearned nor unwise, who, at the beginning of the conflict, saw good reasons for doubting whether self-government was, after all, justified of its children. Nor is this wholly surprising. The spectacle of a powerful, efficient, and inscrutable if not silent, autocracy, apparently omniscient and irresistible, compared with the earlier phenomena exhibited by democracies confronted by a crisis, made many long for less liberty and more government. The panegyries upon German unity, self-sacrifice, patriotism, and preparedness, found credence even among many loth to give up their faith in democracy. And had the great drive on Paris succeeded, had the war been brought to a speedy end with the triumph of the Teutonic cause, there is little doubt but the world might have turned, in greater or less degree, to Prussian principles of

government, perhaps even to Prussian principles of public morality—as, after the Franco-Prussian war, it turned to the Prussian military system. Democracy would thus have received a damaging blow at the moment when it seemed about to make fresh conquests in the strongholds of autocracy.

But the drive failed; and men have had time to think. That is the tremendous service which the French army and the English expeditionary force rendered to the world; that is the meaning of the battle of the Marne. Since then it has been possible to judge from the revelations of the morals and methods of the militarists something of the meaning of the spirit which they represent. From those revelations we have learned much. We have seen a marvel of mechanical efficiency applied to war; we have come to realize, as never before, how great and far-reaching were the results of economic and of scientific methods, of thoroughness, of the capacity for taking infinite pains, of intelligent organization, of foresight and preparation for apparently every contingency. We have recognized the great qualities which made for success in many fields; and we have given unstinted, perhaps unwarranted praise to their authors.

Yet this is not the only lesson we have learned, nor the greatest. As the long, wearing conflict has gone on, after the first great shock and strain of great peaceful societies suddenly precipitated into a struggle for existence, it has been a tremendous relief to those of us who still believe in government of the people and by the people, as well as for the people, to realize that the democracies have not been unequal to the burdens laid on them. Never is comparison between autocracy and democracy more damaging to the popular side of the argument than in time of war. The one with its huge complex mechanism subject to one will, secret in plan, firm in decision, and in action swift, shows its most favorable side at such a time. The other, slow to decide and slower still to strike, hampered by rival counsels, compelled

to seek support for all its actions from a million-opinioned populace, finds its every weakness glaringly revealed in a situation where immediate action is imperative. For democracy is essentially a government of peace. Yet the democracies have met the test. They have revealed a resource and resolution, which, with all the defects engendered by the necessity of haste, have yielded nothing to the long preparation of the absolutists. They have developed a determination, which, proceeding not from the will of groups or individuals but from the slowly roused yet mighty and deep-lying purpose of a whole people, is far more terrible than that of an autocracy. They have not shown at once the leadership which comes from long preparation to a given end, but they have developed in the stress of war a school of public men tried in the fire of events which purges all the dross, till they remain the last and finest expression of the people whence they sprang. And they have, above all, remained throughout true to those principles of humanity which are the foundation of self-government.

Nor is this all we have learned from this great conflict of arms and ideals. We have found that there may be greatness of aim and incredible efficiency in execution without that higher morality, that deeper public sense, which for want of a better name we call conscience. We have seen success so deified that men were ready to sacrifice the things which many of us hold dearer than success for the accomplishment of their aims. We have seen that the material needs of a society may be infinitely better cared for than our own, while individual liberty and, if you like, dignity, are ruthlessly sacrificed to the will of a state, which, in its last resolution, means a handful of its members. We have come to realize that there are two standards of efficiency.

And we are not moved to follow such an example. We are prepared to accept the lessons of patriotism and preparedness, of system and efficiency, the skill and infinite pains which make for material greatness, the social care

which makes for the betterment of the masses, the many virtues of a great people in their private affairs. But we are not ready to accept the unqualified worship of success; we are not ready to exchange self-government for autocracy, liberty for comfort; to sacrifice honor and the esteem of our fellow men for power, nor the higher for the lower efficiency. We shall prepare, but not for conquest; we shall educate, but not for world dominion; we shall hold to our ideals and raise them as high as we may; but we shall not demand the world's assent to them at the price of conflict. And we shall maintain, as we began, our insistence upon our rights to be the captains of our souls, and our insistence upon a "decent respect for the opinions of mankind." We shall endeavor, so far as in us lies, to adapt our old battle-cry to new conditions, "to establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of *Liberty*." And this is the answer of America.

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